

How to Read Informational Texts

Before Reading

- Set a purpose for reading. Ask yourself why you are reading this particular text.
- Look over the text to see which elements appear (such as headings, subheadings, illustrations and captions, etc.).
- Examine the titles, headings, and subheadings, and scan for words that stand out.
- Look for words and phrases that might give you clues about how the information is organized.
- Read any overviews, summaries or questions. In a shorter piece, read the opening and concluding sentences or paragraphs.
- Examine each illustration and read the titles or captions.
- Recall what you already know about the topic.
- Record some questions you might have about the topic.

During Reading

- Divide the reading task into smaller chunks (chunking the text into paragraphs, chunking sections by sub-headings, etc.). Read a chunk, pause and think about what you read, and write a brief one-sentence summary or brief point-form notes to help you remember important and interesting information.
- Read quickly, then slowly. Skim the sections you think will support your purpose for reading. When you find specific information you want, slow down and read it word by word. You may need to reread the passage several times.
- Read the selection and jot down thoughts, responses to your questions and new questions that occur to you.

After Reading

- Make connections to what you already know about the topic. How does the information you have read add to or alter what you knew about the topic?
- Refer to the text to find evidence to support your response to the text.

Adapted from "Think Literacy – Cross-Curricular Approaches Grades 7-12"